

To The Bright Honorable The Marquess of  
Presented to his Lordship  
On ADULTERY.

4749

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S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

R Y E, in S U S S E X,

BY *Graham (W.)*  
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THE REVEREND LORD PRESTON.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. WILLIAMS, at No. 38, in Fleet-Street.

MDCCLXXII.

[ Price One Shilling. ]

1784

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TO THE WORSHIPFUL  
MR. MAYOR OF RYE,

AND HIS BRETHREN

THE JURATES,

THIS DISCOURSE

IS ADDRESSED,

BY

THEIR OBLIGED

HUMBLE SERVANT,

Preston.

TO THE WORKSHIP  
MR. MAYOR OF RYE,  
AND HIS BRETHREN  
THE JURATS,  
THIS DISCOURSE  
IS ADDRESSED,



BY

THEIR OBLIGED

HUMBLE SERVANT,

P. Nelson.



S E R M O N.

II SAMUEL, Chap. XII. former part of Ver. 7.

And NATHAN said unto DAVID, Thou art

the man.

*If there is any Truth in of Human Religion, it dictates of Common-Sense, Seduction, & Its Sister*

A CLERGYMAN, as St. Paul observes, ought not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ—It is the province of every man, who has the honor to preach Christ's Gospel, to endeavour to mend the human heart, to speak home truths, and not, like parasitical timeservers, to speak smooth things. It is their province to rebuke vice, and immorality, and to prefer, upon every occasion, a conscientious faithful discharge of their

*Adultery, and Vices, which will be ever held in of greatest detestation*

their duty to pleasing the great. But, alas! my Christian brethren, *we become enemies*, like poor St. Paul, *because we speak the truth!*

When we see high birth licking the dust, and grandeur mixed with littleness, we absolutely betray our sacred trust, nay, we become little ourselves, if we do not embrace every opportunity of rebuking vice, and folly---  
*And Nathan said unto David, Thou art the man!*

If there is any truth in the Christian religion, if there is any reason in the dictates of common sense, Seduction, and its sister vice, Adultery, are, *and ever will be*, vices of the greatest notoriety. Strange therefore is it that these vices should be so predominant in the world---Stranger is it that men, who profess the purest religion, should, in the place of being guided by the sober dictates of reason, and conscience, attend to the clamours of unruly sense, and ungoverned appetite.

This vice, Adultery, is absolutely an outrage to humanity, to good manners, to society---It sports with the dignity of human nature---Its votary is held in deserved detestation by all serious, and well-disposed people---Its votary coolly spurns at morality, deviates from the dignity of his nature, and resists the sacred voice of Reason, whose precepts the Allwise Creator of Mankind has deeply implanted in our minds. Give him but an opportunity, he has no idea of virtue---honor, and integrity fly away, like chaff before the wind.

And here permit me to observe, that the more elevated the station of life, in which the Adulterer is placed, the greater is the injury, which he does to society. People in an inferior walk of life are fond of imitation, and falsely imagine, through a want of education, and reflection,



tion, that what their superiors do, must necessarily be right, and proper, at least that it is scarcely wrong.

Other vices *have* some excuse—for instance, that of heat of passion upon repeated provocations; or that of exclaiming against those, who have used us ill; which yet a man, in the cooler hours of reflection, a time, when reason takes place, would blush at---whereas, *this horrid vice*, as ungenerous to the offended party, as it is heinous in the sight of God, is attended with *such baneful consequences*, that no man of any tolerable principle would ever be guilty of it. Want of principle is want of *common honesty*, and want of common honesty is a glaring proof of a total disregard, or inattention to our duty enforced in the Gospel.

How deeply affected must be the injured husband, who has, if he is confined to the most laborious scenes of life, endeavoured by the sweat of his brows to maintain his wife, and children, who has early initiated the pledges of his love in the principles of Christianity, who has promised himself a perpetual scene of joy, and happiness in the agreeable prospect of his childrens proving blessings to him, to make this *sorrowful*, this *painful* reflection, “That probably some of them are supposititious, the spurious offspring of his bed defiled!” It is absolutely sufficient to break asunder the strings, which hold the heart---*nay, the very heart itself!* It is sufficient to bring down the grey hairs of the disconsolate husband with sorrow to the grave. To hear that one of the foster sex, who was once dearer to him than the apple of the eye, who was apparently possessed of every amiable quality to make him happy, has violated the nuptial bed, *must be a most aggravating circumstance!* Sorry am I to make the  
*melancholy*

*melancholy reflection*, that this vice is at present, as it were, become epidemical--*It rages*, to use the royal psalmist's remark, *like the pestilence at noon-day*--Almost every newspaper furnishes us with repeated instances of this horrid crime, and domestic occurrences furnish us with the same. Surely the air is become infectious, and the infection daily increases. Crimes, the commission of which do not affect a third person, but center in the person, who commits them, will be pardoned by the compassionate Author of our Existence, upon the reasonable condition of a sincere repentance---That divine attribute, his mercy, *which*, says holy David, *is over all his works*, will incline a gracious Deity to pardon vices of a less atrocious nature; whereas, this horrid vice, committed merely to indulge a passion, which we enjoy in common with the beasts of the field, and is attended with *so many aggravating circumstances*, that no man of common honesty (even laying aside considerations of a religious nature!) would perpetrate it, is almost unpardonable. Far be it from me to set any limits to the mercy of an All-merciful Creator; I know my duty better; but this *I will say*, and *assert as a truth*, that this vice is of *so black a dye*, that it almost requires an immensity of mercy to pardon it. We may read that, among the Jews, this sin was punished with death.

Consider, I conjure you, that the most mean artifices are too frequently made use of in Seduction, and that, whilst the unsuspecting husband is receiving his supposed friend under his hospitable roof, entertaining him in the best manner, which his fortune will admit of, thanking him in the warmest terms for his professions of friendship, the rank debauchee is contriving means to do him an irreparable injury, is laying the deepest plot to deprive him



him of his peace of mind for ever.---Is not this the very quintessence of insincerity, of baseness, of ingratitude, of, in short, every thing which is irreligious and immoral! It is absolutely every thing which is bad, base, disfingenuous, dishonorable, dishonest.

To be deceived (cruelly deceived!) in imagining a man, who was once dearer to us than gold, or the very strings which hold the heart, to be our friend, who thus proves himself to be our greatest enemy, what is it? I really want words to express myself.

Besides the mischievous effects, which arise from setting a bad example, which prevails in this age of vice, and immorality more than precept, how heinous does this vice appear in the sight of God, a *God of purity*! in the sight of that perfect Being, *who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity!*

In regard to discountenancing this horrid (sorry am I to add!) fashionable vice, the best argument, next to those with which religion furnishes us, which can possibly be advanced, is that which ought to be written in golden letters, "*Let us do unto others as we would have them do unto us.*" This most excellent maxim has the sanctions of reason and common sense for its basis---the best sanctions in the world. The man, who knows the will of the Almighty, and the nature of the ten commandments, a duty indispensably incumbent upon us, must be conscious that he offends God whensoever he is guilty of a breach of either of them. The seventh forbids this vice, and fixes a restraint upon lust, and sensuality. By this vice we abuse several of the divine attributes---we particularly abuse the majesty of God, as it is in his power to snatch us away in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and inflict an

B

eternal

The Learner  
 & Dr. War  
 Remark.

eternal punishment upon us—we abuse that glorious attribute, *his mercy*, by which our lives are hourly preserved—we also abuse the holiness of the Almighty, *who*, as I have observed, *is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*.

As we are Christians, and promises of everlasting happiness are made to us in the Gospel upon the reasonable condition of a sincere repentance, for the sake of our immortal souls, let our conversation be righteous and virtuous. All which is required at our hands as a return for an infinity of mercies bestowed upon us, is that we should *do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God*.

We ought therefore in point of gratitude (if we have any ingenuous sentiments in our breasts!) as well as duty, to walk in the paths of religion and virtue, and, says the Apostle, *by patient continuance in well doing, to seek for glory, honor, and immortality*.

When passion begins to take the lead, let us not lose sight of reason, but calmly reflect upon the fatal extravagances, which a gratification of it will hurry us into—let us by prayer and supplication entreat the Almighty to endue us with such uprightness of heart, that we may avoid every temptation, which may occasion our committing this sin—to possess our souls with a lively sense of better things than are to be met with in this vale of tears and misery.

To a man of ingenuous sentiments, the following question, one would think, would be a sufficient restraint;—*How can I commit this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Want of reflection, my Christian brethren, is an inlet to numberless immoralities, and follies—but, believe me, I speak a serious truth, whilst we act contrary to the suggestions of our conscience; whilst, captivated with the

To my Christian  
brethren,



the charms of beauty, we can be so base as to commit an action in private, which we should blush to hear of in public, we can never be at peace either with God, or ourselves.—Alas! we may play a false game with man, but we cannot deceive *that omniscient Being* who knows every avenue of the heart, *who is about our bed, and spieth out all our ways.*—As actions speak the man, a regard for character, *which to some men is dearer than life itself,* would, one would think, be sufficient to restrain us from this vice,

It is not, believe me, rioting in the most excessive gratifications, and intoxicating ourselves with the drink of pleasure; it is not running from visit to visit—where the grand, the important cause of religion has little share in our conversation, but on the contrary we are too apt to sow the prolific seeds of defamation; for instance, he is a good kind of man—*but*—cruel monosyllable!—it is not whiling away our time in nonsense and dissipation; which constitute real happiness—*no*—It is religion and virtue alone which can make us tolerably easy—*It is religion and virtue,* (the latter of which consists in doing all the good in our power, and preventing harm, which can partly charm away the troubles of human life. In the cooler hours of reflection, ~~when reason~~ bears sway, a recollection of a life well spent in the discharge of every religious, and moral duty, of having stopped by some seasonable relief the falling tear, and rising sigh of the disconsolate widow, who often weeps, *not like Rachael, because her children are not,* but because they are alive, exposed to penury and want, to all the hardships of an hard-hearted world, can alone administer peace, and comfort to us.

*Abstract  
from Relig  
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*I Attend  
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are guilty  
The enorm  
Vice!  
The Ca  
Learned  
Rutherford  
Definition  
of Virtue*

To conclude, let us look upon this sin in its proper light; and the happy consequence will be, that we shall hold it in the greatest detestation, and abhorrence---let us consider that life is a serious concern, and that it is highly imprudent in us to trifle with it---let us take the Apostle's excellent advice, "*Press forward to the mark of the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus our Lord*---let us by our good examples reclaim the vicious, and recall them into the paths of religion, of virtue, of honor, of discretion---let the important interests of piety, and virtue be our chief concern---let us be guided in all our thoughts, words and actions, by its excellent precepts, and avoid whatsoever is contrary to them---let us by our good examples encourage the practice of religion, and virtue, and stop the torrent of vice, and immorality---let the clergy, the *ambassadors of Christ*, consider what an important charge they are engaged in---let them not speak smooth things to their audience, nor prophesy deceits, but so instruct them in the duties of Christianity, that all who hear them may be ready, says the Apostle, to give to every one an answer of the reason of the hope that is in them---let them cry aloud, and spare not to shew men their transgressions. If we cast an eye into the world, how ~~visible is the declension of religion~~! Pleasure swallows up the day, and mad revellings wing away the hours of the night---we daily spurn at the goodness of the Almighty, and affront him to his face---vice is dressed so gaily, that we can scarcely distinguish it from virtue---" There is no difference, says a sensible writer, between the vices of the great, the right honorable ones (I speak ironically), and their inferiors, except it be that the former affront their Maker more politely, by their ~~lotteries~~ and masques

*Luxurious routs, games,*

*ays of Learned  
Watts,*

*Always  
that asketh*

*oes Grophane  
abound!*



~~rades, than the latter.~~---Poor Britain! how truly  
~~wretched is thy present situation! when visiting and~~  
~~gaming, even on that very day, which ought to be set~~  
~~apart for the more immediate service of God, and in-~~  
~~structing our families in their duty, ~~with other fashion-~~~~  
~~able vices,~~ engross the time of our superiors.---Let there-  
 fore the clergy consider how many souls may perish  
 through their neglect!--Let them not wink at these enor-  
 mous vices, but conscientiously exert themselves, and  
 endeavour to avert those heavy judgments, which, before  
 we may be aware of them, may fall upon us---Thus may  
 true religion, and useful virtue flourish, and increase;  
 anarchy, confusion, and every evil work be banished our  
 land. This, if any thing, through God's grace, may  
 produce a general reformation of life and manners---  
 There cannot, believe me, be any peace amongst the  
 contending parties, till we are at peace amongst ourselves,  
 ---nor can they hope to be reconciled to each other, before  
 they are reconciled to their Creator. To return---Let us  
 never indulge a criminal idea---Let us not deceive our-  
 selves, like the royal Psalmist, *who convicted himself out*  
*of his own mouth*---When Nathan had complained to him of  
the harsh behaviour of a rich man, who spared to take of  
his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the way-  
faring man, that was come unto him, but took the poor  
man's lamb, which he had bought, and nourished up,  
which grew up together with him, and his children, which  
did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and  
was unto him as a daughter, David's sentence was passed  
at the very time upon himself), As the Lord liveth, the  
man, that hath done this thing shall surely die, and he  
shall

with other  
 fashionable  
 Vices,

shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this, and had no pity.

Excellent is the ingenious Mr. Sterne's remark, "That David's is no uncommon case---We see, says he, some one or other perpetually copying this bad original, sitting in judgment upon himself, hearing his own cause, and not knowing what he is doing; hasty in passing sentence, and even executing it too with wrath upon the person of another, when, in the language of the Prophet, one might say to him with justice, Thou art the man!"

As there is not (I speak a serious truth!) any thing worthy the thought of a sensible man, a conscientious discharge of our duty to God, and our brethren, and providing for our families excepted, let us detach ourselves from this vain, miserable, futile world, and place our thoughts, and desires upon those objects, which are alone capable of affording us a rational entertainment---A consciousness of this alone will furnish us with a pleasing serenity of mind---In short, my Christian brethren, whilst the vain, and the gay while away their time in a warm pursuit of amusement; whilst, as I have already observed, pleasure swallows up the day, and mad revelings wing away the hours of the night, let us act a different part---let us scorn the imputation of sacrificing to Venus, the goddess of dissipation---let us banish every impure thought, and never indulge a criminal desire---none, the most worthless excepted, can ever be advocates for female licentiousness, for conjugal infidelity.

Far be it from me to recommend a reserved, prudish manner of behaviour to the softer sex---innocent mirth is allowable; at the same time, whilst you are merry, be wise

For to  
Bacchus, &  
God of Wine



wise---in short, be discretely chearful, and innocently gay.

Steady in the grand, the important cause of religion, and virtue, let us all by our good examples promote their interests, and, whilst numbers of the gayer part of mankind seem to be running out of their wits, let us retain ours---no longer ramble from visit to visit, from one scene of dissipation to another, from nonsense to nonsense, from vanity to vanity.---This is not satire, or declamation---no---it is matter of fact, and, if we throw an eye into the world, we shall soon be convinced of the truth of it.

Let us abhor vice, and immorality, conform our lives and conversations to the precepts of the Gospel, *which are alone able to make us wise unto salvation, the best wisdom in the world*; and the ~~happy~~ consequence will be, that we shall be easy here, and happy (*inexpressibly happy!*) in the Heaven of Heavens---Which that we may all be, when we are departed this *painful*, this *miserable* life, may God, *the God of mercy*, grant to us all for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom be ascribed, as is most due, by us, and by all men, all honor, power, might, majesty, and dominion, now, henceforth, and to all eternal ages.

T H E E N D.





